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Ichabod Simmons House 1825



Nathaniel Simmons' homestead farm was located in Duxbury near the Marshfield line. A few years before his death, which occurred in 1835, he divided the property among his children. To his son, Ichabod, for \$50 he sold a tract of land 50 square rods adjacent to his own homestead. According to the custom of the times, Ichabod had no doubt built his house on this land when he was married. To his 3 unmarried daughters, Parthenia, Althea and Lucy, for \$150 Nathaniel sold his homestead where they continued to live next to Ichabod and his family.

Ichabod, second son of Nathaniel, was born in 1801 and was a master mariner. He had 2 children: Marcia, named after her mother and born in 1830, and Ichabod Jr., born in 1831. Apparently he met with financial losses at this time, quite common among sea captains, so he was obliged to mortgage his house for \$331.60 to James Ford and his brothers. The deed reads "provided Ichabod Simmons pay to Ford \$351.49 in 2 years with interest, after 12 months then his deed and note of hand shall

be void." Ichabod was unable to pay this, so his home became the property of the Fords, but it is likely that he continued to live there, renting it from them. The Ford brothers, who owned Ford's store, held many mortgages in town at that point.

In 1850 the Fords sold Ichabod's house to Briggs Harlow, a carpenter from Marshfield, for \$250. Briggs was married to Judith Weston in 1847 so doubtless they established their home here. In 1858 Briggs Harlow bought the Nathaniel Simmons house from Lucy Simmons of Duxbury and Althea Cushman of Marshfield. Parthenia had died in 1840. Thus the 2 houses were under one ownership for the first time. Briggs lived here until 1876 when he died of typhoid at the age of 59. His daughter, Lucia Briggs Harlow, continued to occupy the house until 1920 when she sold it to Clara Angell. It has changed hands numerous times since then.

The house consists of 3 parts: the west end, which was Ichabod's house, a Cape style, the east end, which was Nathaniel's house, and the portion in between which existed as early as when Ichabod built his house. At that point, all 3 parts were attached despite the fact that separate families were occupying the 2 sides. The center part contains the staircase leading to all rooms on the second floor, but there is a back stairway on Ichabod's side so the central stairway may have been connected only to Nathaniel's second story or loft until one family occupied it all. It is opposite what was Nathaniel's front door. There is a central chimney in Ichabod's Cape connected with his kitchen on the north and the fireplace in the west front room. Another chimney and fireplace has been added on the east side of the east front room beside the central stairway. There is a third chimney on the eastern side of the house, which is now used for kitchen and dining room in what was Nathaniel's original house. A second story bedroom has been finished recently on that side. On Ichabod's side only one room is finished. In the other room the unusually wide boards are in evidence and the excellent construction is easily noted.

There are many houses which had an older building moved to the back for a kitchen and some in which the main house was constructed in front of an old kitchen ell but this is unusual in that it was 2 separate buildings attached before they were made into a single dwelling house.

The house, facing south on Careswell St., is, therefore, a long, not too narrow building which seems almost to grow out of its setting, fairly far back from the road and well protected now by shrubbery. The alterations have been minimal and basically the restoration has left it amazingly unchanged since Ichabod built his small, solid half Cape in the 1820s.

Stewart and Stephanie Burchard enjoy all parts of this unique and lovely home.

Virginia Seaver, Researcher